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REMARKS

Receipt of the Office Action mailed February 20, 2003, in the above identified patent application is respectfully acknowledged. Claims 1-128 are pending in the application. Claims 6, 14-17, 19, 20, 31-36, 39, 41-44, 47-56, 64, 72-75, 81, 87, 89, 90, 93, 94, 98, 106-109, 115, 121-124, 127 and 128 have been withdrawn pending further prosecution based on Applicants' election in the Response filed November 26, 2002. The remaining claims have been examined and, of these, claims 9-12, 21-24, 29, 67-70, 80, 82, 83, 101-104, 114, 116 and 117 have been objected to but indicated as being allowable. Claims 1, 9, 21, 29, 61, 67, 76, 80, 82, 84, 95, 101, 110, 114, 116 and 118 have been amended herein.

In addition, a drawing sheet including proposed drawing amendments to Fig. 4 shown in red thereon is attached for consideration by the Examiner.

Further, amendments to page 16 of the specification adding reference numerals to the originally filed description thereon enumerating the electrical bus bars molded within the rearview mirror support have been submitted as set forth above.

Reconsideration of the application in view of the above amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Withdrawn Claims

In the Office Action, paragraphs 1-4, the Examiner detailed claims which have been withdrawn from further consideration as being drawn to non-elected inventions. However, in the continuation sheet attached to the Office Action summary, the Examiner indicated that one of the claims withdrawn from consideration was claim 18. Yet, in paragraphs 3 and 4 of the Office Action, it was indicated that claim 18 was examined and was readable on the elected invention. Therefore, it is noted that claim 18 is not withdrawn from consideration and is one of the claims currently under examination.

Amendments to the Specification and Drawings

In paragraph 5 of the Office Action, the Examiner objected to the drawings as failing to show the electrical bus bars molded within the rearview mirror support as set forth in claims 29, 80 and 114. A requirement for showing that feature in the drawings to support those claims was made.

Applicants herewith submit a proposed correction to Fig. 4 of the drawings shown in red on a photocopy of the drawing sheet including Fig. 4. The electrical bus bars 59

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molded within the rearview mirror support 12 are shown in the proposed amended Fig. 4 having surfaces 59 exposed at each end of the sleeve 12. Appropriate reference numerals 59, 59a are included in the proposed drawing correction.

In addition, the specification has been amended at page 16, lines 8-13, to include the reference numerals in the proposed drawing corrections and to refer the reader to Fig. 4.

It is respectfully submitted that these proposed drawing changes do not add any new matter to the application but merely illustrate subject matter fully described and present in the original application. Accordingly, review and approval of these proposed drawing corrections to Fig. 4 and entry of the amendments to the specification at page 16 is respectfully requested along with withdrawal of the objection to the drawings.

Allowable Claims

In paragraph 7 of the Office Action, the Examiner indicated that claims 9-12, 21-24, 29, 67-70, 80, 82, 83, 101-104, 114, 116 and 117 were objected to but would be allowable if rewritten to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. In response, Applicants have now amended claims 9, 21, 29, 67, 80, 82, 101, 114 and 116 to be in independent form and to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. It is noted that in claims 80 and 114, amendments have been included to provide a proper antecedent basis for "said electrical conductors."

In view of these amendments, it is respectfully submitted that claims 9-12, 21-24, 29, 67-70, 80, 82, 83, 101-104, 114, 116 and 117 are now in condition for allowance.

The Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Apart from the above indicated allowable claims, the remaining claims which had not been indicated as being withdrawn from further prosecution have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Skogler et al. 4,646,210 in view of Goble 2,456,182 taken alone or in combination with either DeLine et al. 6,420,975 or Adams et al. 4,936,533. Applicants have now amended independent claims 1, 61 and 95 to clarify their invention over these references. As amended, it is respectfully submitted that the remaining claims not withdrawn or indicated as being allowable are themselves allowable over the art of record for the following reasons.

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As amended, claim 1 defines an interior rearview mirror assembly suitable for use in a vehicle comprising a molded, polymeric rearview mirror mount formed from molding a polymeric material having a first color. The rearview mirror mount is adapted for attachment to one of a windshield portion of the vehicle and a header portion of the vehicle. Claim 1, as amended, further defines a molded, polymeric rearview mirror housing, the housing formed from molding a polymeric material having a second color and a reflective rearview mirror element included in the housing, a molded, polymeric rearview mirror support formed from molding a polymeric material having a third color, a molded polymeric first pivot element formed from molding a polymeric material having a fourth color, and a molded, polymeric second pivot element formed from molding a polymeric material having a fifth color. The support is pivotally attached to the mirror mount by the first pivot element, the rearview mirror housing being pivotally attached to the support by the second pivot element. At least one electrical accessory is included in the rearview mirror housing, the assembly including electrical conductors for electrically connecting said electrical accessory to the vehicle electrical system, the conductors extending through the first and second pivot elements and the mirror support to the rearview mirror housing. Each of the mirror mount, mirror support, rearview mirror housing, first pivot element and second pivot element is formed in its respective color by molding from a polymeric material of that color.

Claims 61 and 95 have been similarly amended to define a molded, polymeric rearview mirror mount, a molded, polymeric rearview mirror housing, a molded polymeric rearview mirror support, and a molded polymeric first pivot element as well as a molded, polymeric second pivot element. In claim 61, as amended, the first, second, third, fourth, and fifth colors are defined as being substantially the same with each of the mirror mount, mirror support, rearview mirror housing and first and second pivot elements being formed in substantially the same color by molding from polymeric material of that color. Claim 95, as amended, however, defines at least two of the mirror mount, mirror support, rearview mirror housing and first and second pivot elements as being molded from polymeric materials of different colors, each of the mirror mount, mirror support, rearview mirror housing, and first and second pivot elements being formed in its respective color by molding from polymeric material of that color. Unlike claim 1, as amended, claims 61 and 95, as amended, do not

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refer to an electrical accessory or electrical conductors for electrically connecting such an accessory to the vehicle electrical system.

In addition to the above amendments, Applicants have amended claims 76 and 110, which depend from claims 61 and 95, respectively, to state that the assembly includes electrical conductors extending through the rearview mirror support. Further, claims 84 and 118, which also depend from claims 61 and 95, respectively, have been amended to state that the assembly includes electrical conductors extending through the rearview mirror support, thereby providing antecedent basis for the electrical conductors referred to later in those claims.

As amended, Applicants' claims 1, 61 and 95 now clarify that the invention of the present application is directed to molding the indicated portions of an interior rearview mirror assembly from polymeric materials in defined colors. Thus, the necessity of painting those portions or elements is eliminated. In addition, claim 1 and the claims dependent thereon also include directing electrical wiring through the assembly. These features are fully supported in the specification, especially at pages 2, lines 1-12, in the Summary of the Invention at pages 2-7 and especially at page 6, lines 23-28, and at pages 15, lines 6-34 and page 16, lines 1-13. As set forth therein, it is stated that the respective rearview mirror assembly components may be molded in desired colors or color matched, thereby obviating the need for painting any of the components. As stated in the specification, avoiding the painting step not only reduces the cost for manufacture of the assembly, but reduces the risk of damage to the various components during manufacture, shipping or installation, thereby reducing the number of assemblies which must be discarded or scrapped. The colors of the various molded components may be color matched, such as all being black or another desired color, or two or more of the components may be color matched or formed from different colors with respect to the remaining components, or each component may be formed from a molded, polymeric material having a different color. In each case, painting is avoided with the accompanying advantages of reduced cost and elimination of waste by reducing the number of scrap assemblies.

However, such is not the case with the prior art represented by the rearview mirror assemblies shown in the references cited by the Examiner, none of which disclose, teach or suggest the concept of color matching using molded polymeric rearview mirror

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components in the manner now defined by Applicants in amended claims 1, 61 or 95 or the claims dependent thereon, or the avoidance of painting to reduce cost and avoid waste in manufacture, shipping or installation.

The Examiner principally relies upon Skogler et al. 4,646,210 which is representative of the state of the art prior to the present invention. Skogler et al. '210 describes a conventionally known rearview mirror mounting bracket including a pair of ball joints including a metallic casing and connected to a casting or support member 14 for attachment to a windshield mounted support. The ball joints 12, 13 in Skogler et al. '210 are themselves metallic since one is integrally formed with cast support member 14 and the other is insert molded within pivot actuator 26 fitted within the rearview mirror housing 15. No disclosure or suggestion for forming all these various components to be color matched or to have the same color as now set forth in Applicants' amended claims is disclosed or suggested in Skogler et al. '210. This is recognized by the Examiner on page 4 of the Office Action. Moreover, the Examiner's statement that it would have been an obvious matter of design choice to form each element having a different color or substantially the same color since Applicants have not disclosed that the different color or the same color solves any stated problem or is for any particular purpose is respectfully traversed in view of the above noted portions of Applicants' present specification. Applicants have defined a novel and unobvious assembly of components each being formed from molded polymeric material to have a desired color which can be the same and, thus, color matched or different as defined in the various claims. Applicants' invention avoids the necessity of painting the various components thereby reducing cost as well as reducing the risk of damage during manufacture, shipping and installation to reduce the number of discarded assemblies thereby reducing waste in the manufacturing process. As such, Applicants' invention is neither disclosed, taught or suggested by Skogler et al. '210.

Likewise, Goble 2,456,182 fails to disclose or suggest the present invention as defined in Applicants' amended claims 1, 61 or 95, or the claims dependent thereon. While the Examiner points out that Goble teaches conductors 24, 25 extending through first and second pivot elements, a support and a housing, it is clear from a reading of Goble '182 that the concept defined by Applicants in their amended claims is also not disclosed or suggested by Goble. Indeed, as set forth in Goble at column 2, lines 45-55 and column 3, lines 1-7,

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Goble states "That the ball stem unit desirably is a screw machine product of processed steel. Parts may be die cast, even of zinc or aluminum, as well as alloys." Surface treatments are then undertaken to provide hard plating finishes which are central to the operation of the structure set forth in Goble '182. It is clear, therefore, that Goble does not define components of an interior rearview mirror assembly, especially where those components are molded from a polymeric material having colors as defined in Applicants' amended claims. Moreover, the advantages of molding the components in color from polymeric materials to avoid painting and reduce waste and cost in the manufacturing process are also neither disclosed nor suggested and, therefore, provide no basis to modify the structure of Skogler et al. '210.

With respect to claims 2-5, 7, 8, 13, 18, 25-28, 30, 57-59, 62, 63, 65, 66, 71, 76-79, 84, 96, 97, 99, 100, 105, 110-113 and 118, it is respectfully submitted that the structures set forth therein are not shown by either Skogler et al. '210 or Goble '182 taken alone or in any combination where the components are molded from polymeric materials having the colors as defined in amended claims 1, 61 or 95. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that claims 1, 61 and 95, along with these dependent claims, are not disclosed, taught or suggested and, therefore, are not obvious in view of Skogler et al. '210 or Goble '182 taken alone or in any combination.

With respect to claim 60, the mere fact that DeLine et al. 6,420,975 discloses a microphone mounted in a rearview mirror housing does not complete the lack of disclosure missing from Skogler et al. '210 or Goble '182 with respect to Applicants' molded, polymeric rearview mirror assembly components having colors as defined in the amended claims. DeLine et al. '975 does not disclose, teach or suggest any use of molded, polymeric components in a rearview mirror assembly as defined by Applicants herein, especially in colors which are color matched or defined as set forth in Applicants' various claims. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that DeLine et al. '975 does not disclose, teach or suggest the interior rearview mirror assemblies as defined by Applicants in their amended claims, and does not complete the lack of disclosure or teaching for such assemblies which is missing from Skogler et al. and Goble as set forth above.

Finally, the remaining dependent claims 37, 38, 40, 45, 46, 85, 86, 88, 91, 92, 119, 120, 125 and 126, which are directed to the features of the mirror mount and the cooperation with a windshield mounted attachment member all in combination with an

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interior rearview mirror assembly formed from components molded from polymeric material of colors as defined in Applicants' amended claims, are neither taught nor suggested by Adams et al. 4,936,533. Adams is directed to an interior rearview mirror assembly and specifically a mount for attachment to a windshield mounted button. Like Skogler et al., Goble and DeLine et al., however, Adams et al. '533 fails to disclose or teach an interior rearview mirror assembly having molded, polymeric components with colors as defined in Applicants' amended claims. For example, Adams et al. '533 states that mounting arm 12 includes a swaged, one-piece tubular member. Swaging connotes formation from metal which requires painting or some other surface treatment to provide color. Likewise, the remaining components set forth in Adams et al. '533 are not disclosed as all being molded from polymeric material and having colors as defined by Applicants herein. Applicants advantages of avoidance of painting and cost and waste reduction in manufacture are not contemplated or suggested by Adams et al. '533. Therefore, Adams et al. fails to disclose the structure of Applicants' amended claims taken alone. Similarly, any hypothetical combination of Adams et al. with Skogler et al. or Goble would also fail to disclose the structure of Applicants' assemblies as set forth in claims 1, 61 and 95, or dependent claims 37, 38, 40, 45, 46, 85, 86, 88, 91, 92, 119, 120, 125 or 126 which are dependent thereon for the reasons set forth above.

Summary

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that in view of the above amendments to the specification and claims and the proposed amended drawings, the objections to the drawings should be withdrawn and that Applicants' amended claims are now in condition for allowance.

Further, it is respectfully submitted that claims 1, 61 and 95, as amended, are generic and that the withdrawn claims 6, 14-17, 19, 20, 31-36, 39, 41-44, 47-56, 64, 72-75, 81, 87, 89, 90, 93, 94, 98, 106-109, 115, 121-124, 127 and 128 are likewise allowable being dependent or ultimately dependent on allowable generic claims.

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Accordingly, a Notice of Allowance for claims 1-128 is respectfully requested along with notice of approval of the proposed drawing amendments to Fig. 4.

Respectfully submitted,

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May 20, 2003

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